# THE STAGE OF TO-DAY

Plays and Players in the Principal Theatres---New York and Elsewhere.



"THE COUNTY CHAIRMAN."

BY W. E. BURLOCK, JR.

"Merely Mary Ann

A rural drama without a single "I or "b' gosh" in it, with no tearful heroines who have been wronged, and no snow storms into which the young mother and her babe have been driven by a stern but godly parent.

Incredible! is the cry, but nevertheless it has happened, and George Ade, in his comedy drama, "The County Chairman," is responsible. Such an upsetting of theatrical tra-

dition was never before heard of, unless it was when Ade brought his "Sultan of Sulu" to Breadway without a single chorus girl who had been named in a notorious divorce suit, a single Tenderloin joke or immodest suggestion, and had it running to packed houses for months after farces and musical comedles, supposedly reeking with the sort of thing Broadway demands, were produced, had their little vogue and passed

of thing Broadway demands, were produced, had their little vogue and passed away.

In "The County Chairman" Ade has written a play which should duplicate the run of the Sultan.

Its scenes are laid in a small Indiana village and it fairly reeks with its bucolic atmosphere. It is the real true country too, as Ade knows, for he lived twenty years of his life amid just such characters and scenes, and in consequence they ring true. So true that even the New Yorker who has never been anywhere except across the ocean, and to whom such villages and scenes are but dreams of imagination can realize the truth of the picture and understand the emotions which sway the actions of people such as these.

As for the man who once lived in such an atmosphere, and it is said that every man in New York over thirty-five did once live in a country village, it takes him back to the days of his boyhood and shows him how far he has climbed and how much he has achieved since he left the country so clearly and distinctly that a feeling of such satisfaction steals over him that he wants to see the play again and yet again. This is human nature, and it is because George Ade imbibed in the little Indiana village a keen insight to it and irades upon his knowledge that he writes plays which are successes.

The first act of "The County Chairman" is laid in front of the general store in Antioch in the summer. A convention to nominate the prosecuting attorney for the county is in progress in a neighboring village and the whole community is waiting to hear who is heminated.

Jim Hackler the County Chairma.

played by Macklyn Arbuckle, brings word that he want to he want to hear who is heminated.

Hackler the County Chairma. a Hackler the County Chairma.

de by Macklyn Arbuckle, brings
that his young law partner, TillWheeler, was chosen after forly
sts, and that the opposing candidate
to be Judge Elias Rigby (Charles
to be Judge Elias Rigby (Charles
to be him and who had promised to
the beautiful that the country of the girl

meeter had that afternoon asked to a billion had been had that afternoon asked to so. Im Hackler is a big, bluff, rough but dily old countryman, with a fund of live wit and shrewdness which genally manage to land him on top. Arckle in the part was delightful. He emed born to the role, and his persal success was quite as pronounced that of the piece. Earle Brown, as lifered Wheeler, was the weakest spot the entire cast. He was insincere, the ward and numby-pamby, even when ackler had forced him into making a sand against the taunts of Judge Rig. In his love scene with Lucy Rigby acted as though he were frightened death. Mr. Brown may be a othavior of experience, and perhaps sunts his victims by scores, but he scened to me to be sadi- in need of a winstructions from some up-to-date in on "How to act when in love."
The scene of the second act is the ourt-House Grove, where Rigby opens is campalen by hurling insults and conts at Wheeler and daring him to arrake in a joint debate. Wheeler had romised Lucy he would not pay any tiention to her father's words, but at ast he can stand it no longer and rebiles hold; and a free fight. In this act so boiliteal parades takes place and a ompany of children and one of young girls march in, a novel and pleasant lenarture from the usual participants in political parades.

In the third act, four days before election, Hackler obtains proof that Rigby has stolen money left in his trust. Twenty years before Rigby had won by the meet unfair and disponest trick the siri with whom they were both in love, and now Hackler sees a chance to both defeat him at the election and wipe

out partially the old score by the publication of these facts.

Mrs. Rigby hears of his determination and in a scene eloquent by its simple pathos prevails upon him to forego his

The last act shows the Town Hall on election night. After the tide of returns has swayed the advantage from one to the other. Wheeler is finally declared has swayed the advantage from one to the other. Wheeler is finally declared elected, and Lucy, who had quarrelled with him over his words to and about her father, completes his happiness by forgiving him and all ends happily. Although Macklyn Arbuckle is featured and plays the title role, it is doubtful whether he contributes more to the success of the piece than does Willis P. Sweatnam as Sassafras Livingston, who on the programme is described as "the local touch of color."

Of color (black) he certainly had enough. More could not have been seen no matter how much there might have been, and his observations, delivered in a genuine down-South darky accent, were as fine a piece of character work as has been seen on Broadway for many a day. Miriam Nesbitt as Lucy Rigby and Grace Fisher and Rose Beaudet also scored.

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and Grace Fisher and Rose Beaudet also scored.

Philosophers and savants may write for years, but they will never come closer to the colored brother's idea of life than Sassafras does when he says:

"What's the use of being free? Have to work all the time anyhow."

Equally pungent is the County Chairman's remark when the candidate says something about "his" campaign.

"Your campaign! Yours! Why, you're nothing but the candidate."

"Gecree Ade is a bachelor and supposedly a confirmed one, but he shows his knowledge of femininity when Jim Harbler says to Wheeler, when he wants to give up the fight!

"My boy, any woman worth having won't have a cultter."

Such are a few of the bright bits of human mature epigrammaticised with wi'th this delightfut play is told. If New York does not keep it here for mary months we shall be convinced that New York does not want clean, witty, snappy fun, for that and nothing else is "The County Chairman."

## MRS. CARTER.

Mrs. Leslie Carter is now in the middle of her special engagement of twenty-two performances at Belasco's Theatre, and although she is playing two pieces in which she has already played in New York to capacity for a year each, it is only by a lucky chance that one obtains a seat nowadays. With the tremendous prestige which she enjoys now it is difficult to say how long she could play to the capacity of the Belasco Theatre in a new drama of equal strength to "Du Barry" and "Zaza." Mr. Belasco has promised we shall have an opportunity to test the matter next year, but with Mrs. Carter's business continuing as it does it would not be sur-prising if it was the fall of 1905 instead of 1901 which saw her in a new role.

## MISS ELIZABETH'S PRISONER

William Faversham, Mr. Charles Frohman's "mystery" star, so called because few people can see any reason for his occupying a stellar position in the theatrical firmament, opened his annual New York engagement at the Criterion Theatre last Monday in a play by R. N. Stephens and Eyall Swete.

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Mr. Stephens, who is the author of
"An Enemy to the King" and several
stirring remantic plays, would seem to
do better to stick to his own work witaout calling in the aid of a collaborateur,
for "Miss Elizabeth's Prisoner," as his
latest play is called, is a weak and uninteresting affair. It is a play of the
Revolutionary war and teils of the adventures, martial and otherwise, of
Copt. Harry Peyton, of Lee's Light
Horse, William Faversham, Miss Elizabeth Philipse, Hilda Spong, who first
takes Capt. Peyton a prisoner and then
surrenders herself before his impetuous
love-making, played her rather ungrateful part well.

Faversham falled to grasp the character of the man he was supposed to be.
Peyton was a liar, a cad, and there was
more than a suspicion that he would
show the white feather, but he was an
uncouth Colonial, with none of the tricks
of drawling speech in arrogant volce
with which Mr. Faversham invested
him. With an actor like James K.
Hackett or Charles Richman in the part,
who would appreciate the difference be-

Mr.

PICHMAN in Capt Bennington

tween a Colonial backwoodsman and an English trooper of to-day, the role would have been much improved. The whole first act is devoted to allowing Peyton to run off with Miss Elizabeth's favorite have been much improved. The whole first act is devoted to allowing Peyton to run off with Miss Elizabeth's favorite saddle-horse on plea of the urgency of war, and to the horse's bringing him back in a few moments wounded.

Miss Elizabeth is a redhet Tory, and she sees a chance to revenge hegself upon him for his running off withsher horse by holding him prisoner and turning him over to the British, who, as he had at one time been in their army, will hang him as a traitor.

She accordingly sends for the British troops, but before they can arrive Peyton, in the most rapid love scene we have seen in some time-fourteen minutes our trusty chronometer made it—whas her heart, and she hides him from the soldiers she has summoned.

When they have gone and her chance for revenge is pask Miss Elizabeth discovers that Peyton's pretense of love was but a trick to keep his freedom, and for revenge makes him fall genuinely in love with her and then flouts him scornfully. However, in the last act each agrees to forgive and forget, marry and live happily ever after. Mr. Faversham has many followers among New York's theatre-goers, and he will doubtless therefore have a preditable engagement, but he will probably not gain any new admirers from his work in this play.

Percy Lyndall, as Major John Colden.

Percy Lyndall, as Major John Colden. and Charles Avery, as Cuff, a slave, deserve mention.

## "CAPTAIN BARRINGTON."

Victor Manes's play, "Captain Barrington," the best American Revolu-tionary war play which has ever been presented, was shown at the Manhattan Theatre on Monday with Charles Rich-

Theatre on Monday with Charles Richman as the star.

This is Mr. Richman's first appearance in New York as a star, although for the past two years he has, as leading man of the Empire Theatre Stock Company, so far overshadowed his associates that he has been a star in all but name.

That Richman has far more legitimate right to stellar honors than many of those now wearing them every one who has ever seen him is convinced, and in "Cuotain Barrington" he does as is but right that he should, the best work of his entire career. The scenes of the play the laid during the Revolution.

Capt. Harrington is a dashing British officer, while his twin brother, peither of whom, however, being aware of the other's existence, is a lieutenant in the Contineutal army.

Onto the capture by treachery Gen, Washington, but its folled through the heroism and daring of his brother. Lieut. Pleiding, Mr. Richman plays both roles, and daring of his brother, Lieut. Pleiding, Mr. Richman plays both roles, and the contrawal stampos him as an actor of rare ability. As the dashing devilously and the contrawal stampos him as an actor of rare ability. As the dashing devilously and the same of the same which is in moreod contrast to the outpook which animate the patriot.

Even his voice portrays the difference of spirit, and the Ill-fitting clothes of the contrast the contrast of the contrast of

some, ocean-out feelow that no one with a drop of good red blood in its veint-can withhold a feeling of admiration for him, and this is intensified by Mr. Richman's refinement and good breeding. A gentleman is a gentleman despite clothes or disguise, and consequently, no matter what his role, Mr. Richman lends to his parts an atmusphere of manliness and dignity which terms on the stage equal and room.

## phere of manihess and delay few men on the stage equal and none "WINSOME WINNIE."

Special interest is attached to the presentation of "Winsome Winnie," in which Paula Edwardes will make her New York debut as a star at the Casino Theatre Tuesday, Dec. 1, because it is the first production offered by Jakobowski and Paulton since their triumph in "Erminie." And the recent and brilliant



acquaintance of "Marjorie Beil," an American heiress, who has been summoned to England to meet ner guardian, "Lord Poverish," whose name is most appropriate. He has planned to marry his ward to his son, and thus save the family exchequer. Marjorie, who has never seen Lord Poverish or any member of his family, in a moment of desperation, changes place with Winnie Walker, in order to test her new-found friends. On this change of identity hinges the action of the place, for Winsome Winnie, being taken for the heiress, is abducted by bandits, along with a rich manufacturer of pills, who has been mistaken for Lord Poverish. Eventually Love, in the person of Lord Poverish's son, Desmond, solves the difficulties, and defles parental authority for the sake of Winsome Winnie, while the heiress wins the heart of Dr. Tierey, the pill-maker, for herself alone and is content.

Miss Edwardes's support includes Joseph C. Miroa, Richard F. Carrolli, W. P. Carleton, W. E. Philp, E. Lovat-Fraser and William Corless; Misses Heien Redmond, Isobel Hall, Jooyna Howland, Daisy Green, Mildred Keanney, Anna Cameron and scores of young and pretty women who know how to sing as well as dames, while a notable feature is the revival of the powerful male chorus, to which is allotted some of the finest numbers in the score.

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## ELEANOR ROBSON.

From out-of-town criticism of Eleanor Robson's "Merely Mary Ann," New York is quite prepared to see one of the greatest bits of acting as well as one of

York is quite prepared to see one of the greatest bits of acting as well as one of the most interesting plays of the year when she begins her engagement at the Garden Theatre in January. Even Mr. Charles Froham thinks well enough of it to hold unlimited time for Miss Robinson.

It seems only a year or so ago that she first began to aitract attention in the winsome role of Bonita in Augustus Thomas's "Arizona," and yet to-day she is in the first rank of stellar actresses and one of the few who in this discouraging season have scored an unqualified success. Since her "Arizona" days Miss Robson has been a member of the Mrs. LeMoyne-Otis Skinner-Eleanor Robson combination, leading woman for Kyrle Bellew and the Juliet of last spring's remarkabe company presenting "Romeo and Juliet." Her success as Juliet led Liebler & Co., her managers, to decide that the time was ribe to launch her at the head of a dramatic organization, despite her youthfulness, for she is only about twenty-two years old.

"Merely Mary Ann." the vehicle which the management chose for this purpose, has just closed an engagement in Chicago which presages a highly profitable season for the management and one marked for the artistic achievement of the star.

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cago which presages a hishly profitable season for the management and one marked for the management and one marked for the artistic achievement of the star.

""Merely Mary Ann." wrote one Chicago critic, is a chapter from the best of Dickens. seasoned with a dash of Dickens. seasoned with a dash of Dickens. seasoned with a dash of Thackeray and produced so well that one's favorites live before his eves. There is the humer of Mrs Bardwell the pathos of the life of a Sidney Carton, and a bit of 'Vanity Fair.' And through all was the influence of the girl from 'con country,' who brought into the gloomy, dark, miserable London boarding-house something of the fragrance of the bluebells of her beloved country."

And it was the critic of the Chicago Evening Post who wrote: 'Miss Adama in her ingenue days could not have painted Mary Ann so finely as Miss Robson does. Herec indeed is a welcome addition to the stellar list. Think over the names of the younger women of the stage and suggest one who has the talent and promise Miss Robson shows. To her the public may reasonably look for achievements of importance."

Miss Robson, however, comes from a stock in which expertness in histrionic art has long been conceded. Her father art has long been conceded. Her father is Augustus Cook, whose Napoleon in 'Mms. Saus Gene' carped him unstined praise. Her mother is Madge Cart Cook, at present playing the title role in 'Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch.'

Then, too, in 'Merely Mary Ann,' Israel Zangwill, the author, has done much for Miss Robson. No more chaming story can be found in contemporaneous fiction. It is full of the pathos of real life, and is told with the rividences of description that makes Mr. Zangwill foremost among the brilliant writers of the day. Mr. Zangwill into one her engagement there both her managers, Liebler & Co., and Mr. Charles Frohman expect he rto he as valuable a star on the other side of the ocean as she is already here.

Thomas Q. Senbrooke surprised an instant formal expect here both her managers,

Thomas Q. Senbrooke surprised an in-Thomas G. Sendrooke surprised an ingistent female book agent the other day.
A friend of his tells the story:
"Mr. Sendrooke was just sitting down
to study a new song when a pretty
woman rang his door bell. No one
would have supposed that she was a
book agent. Mr. Sendrooke told her he
would not buy the book even if he really
wanted it, which he did not.

"'Never mind, she said gayly, "won't cost you anything to look at it I should like to have you do that."

"Mr. Seabrooke is oblighing. He did look at it. He read the introduction and then the first chapter. It was about 10 o'clock when he took up the book. At 11 o'clock the pretty book agent had become uneasy. He never raised his eyes. Another hour and she was pacing up and down the floor. At 1 o'clock be laid the book down, and, reaching for his hat and coat, said:

"That's a clever book. I regret that I cannot read more of it, but I must away to rehearsal."

"She was mad but she didn't say a word. Grabbing the book, she shoved it into her satchel and dashed out of the office."

Although they were married last spring. Henry Ainley had had but three days of honeymoon when he again joined his wife. Susanne Sheldon. on Sunday. Mr. Ainley is leading man in Maude Adams's company, and Miss Sheldon is leading woman in Charles Richmen's company. leading woman in Charles Richman's company.

Three days after they were married in London Miss Sheldon was summoned by a cablegram from Weber & Fields and left at once to begin rehearsals in "Captain Barrington." Mr. Ainley was detained in London, and only arrived here in time to begin rehearsals for "The Fretty Sister of Jose." "Captain Barrington" has been playing in Boston, and Miss Adams's company has been on the road since they opened, and it was not until Sunday, when Miss Sheldon arrived with the company from Beston, that the bridal pair were reunited.

Liebler & Co. will organize another company to produce "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch" about Jan. 1. The second organization is made necessary on account of the splendid success this homely play of optimism has scored alf along the line. The prediction is freely made that its New York engagement will occupy the remainder of the season.

Dan Daly has been led into vaudeville via F. F. Proctor's Twenty-third Street Theatre, beginning his engagement last Monday night.

Daly's unique method of commending himself to his audiences is to give an imitation of himself. Daly's act consists, in brief, of an appearance in a stage dressing-room, attired in conventional dinner garments. He has a dresser who may be referred to as the trial horse, at times, and as a necessary adjunct, at others.

Having removed his coat, collar and necktie, Daly proceeds to make himself up in the character he has affected during the past decade or so.

The long drooping mustache, the thin blond wig, and the drawl were all in evidence by degrees. While the make-up proceeds, Daly sings a song in his own way, called "Stories Adam Told to Eve." It is well received, and he finishes up his tollet with a few remarks of the haphazard variety.

Then he sings the "Nothing New" song from "The Rounders." in which he made a hit some years ago, and after a short interval does "Oh, Fudge!" from "The New Yorkers." This finishes his act, which runs about twenty-five minutes.

Despite the howls of "bad business" Despite the howls of "bad business" on Broadway, the management of "Babes in Toyland" and the Majestic Theatre have decided to give matiness daily during Christmas week in order that the children may have an opportunity of seeing their piece. The matiness at the Majestic recently have been uncomfortably crowded, it is announced, and this is another reason for the decision.

Wednesday evening of next week, Dec 2 Klaw & Erlanger will present their intest Drury Lane spectacle, "Mother Goose," at the New Amsterdam Treatre for the first time. This will be the largest production this firm has ever made. The company will number over 500 people. Klaw and Erlanger have imported the entire production from Drury Lane and the brediction is confidently made that it will cellpse in magnitude and magnificence of sceneny and costumes the two previous Drury Lane successes in the country. "The Sleeping Beauty and the Beast." and "Mr. Blue Beard." John J. McNally has entirely rewritten the book and Frederick Solomon has provided a new score of brilliant missle. The heavy humor of the femiliant place the clever Mr. McNally has introduced that snapov wit and fun and quickness of action so well liked by American audiences. The principal roles will be played by Joe Cawthorne, who made a great hit as Lena in "The Sleeping Beauty and the Beast." and whe will play "Mother Goose." Harry Bulger, Vola Cillette and Leila McIntyre, who also made great successes of the King, Prince Charming and Princess Beauty in "The Sleeping Beauty and the Peast." will play "Aother Goose." Harry Bulger, Vola Cillette and Leila McIntyre, who also made great successes of the King, Prince Charming and Princess Beauty in "The Sleeping Beauty and the Peast." will play Jack. Jill and Colin. Miss Gillette, the most beautiful formed common on the American stage will have in Colin a "boy's" part, a role in which she excels. Theatre for the first time. This will be the largest production this firm has ever

"The Eternal City," with E. J. Morgan at its head, is proving a veritable gold mine. The production is booked for a tour across the continent and return.